Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Security System Upgrade at Monroe Substation

Project No.: P06650

Project Manager: Micaiah Watkins – TIPF-CSB-2

Location: Snohomish County, Washington.

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance, B1.7 Electronic equipment, B1.11 Fencing, B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities.

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to upgrade the perimeter fence and install new electronic security systems at Monroe Substation. The security upgrades would also include the installation of new gates, cameras, and lighting.

BPA would remove the existing chain link fence and install approximately 5,600 feet of medium security steel mesh fencing topped with razor wire and 15 security poles. In-ground concrete footings supporting the fence poles would be removed and replaced with larger footings to support the taller fence. The replacement fence would be grounded by reconnecting the connections to the existing ground grid. The fence around the parking area would require new grounding conductors that would extend approximately 3 feet to both the inside and outside of the fence and buried. The trenching for the grounding would total approximately 3,700 linear feet, approximately 1 foot wide and 18 inches deep. The trenching would be mechanical, and the trenching backfilled with the soils removed during excavation. Three-inch-deep switchyard rock would be added and would extend 6 feet on the outside and 3 feet on the inside of the fence for grounding protection. In the parking lot, where trenching must occur in areas with asphalt, the trenches would be backfilled with the soils removed during trenching, and the asphalt replaced.

The new fence would occupy the same footprint as the old fence, except for one area on the northern side of the substation; in this location, the fence corner would be extended outwards by 20 feet to accommodate maintenance access, adding approximately 200 square feet of space to the fenced substation yard. The newly created substation yard space would be graded and topped with switchyard rock.

BPA would also remove the existing gates. Two of those gates would be replaced with a swing gate and a slide gate. One new swing gate would be installed. Within the substation yard BPA would install 15 new security poles with cameras. Since these cameras are new security features, some mechanical trenching would be required in the substation yard to run conduit and camera infrastructure. In the fenced parking area BPA would repurpose one wood pole for parking lighting. Trenching would be required to reach the new security poles and run new cable through existing conduit and vaults to the control house. All trenching efforts within substation grounds for security infrastructure would require approximately 4600 linear feet of mechanically-dug trenches

2 ft wide and 3 ft deep. The trenches would be backfilled with material removed during the mechanical trenching process.

Within the control house BPA would install new control cabinets and ancillary equipment as well as a physical access control system, an intrusion detection system, and an integrated video assessment and surveillance system.

The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.102 of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996; 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and the current *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures*, BPA has determined the following:

1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

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Jessica A. Heppler
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

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Attachment(s): Environmental Evaluation

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Evaluation

This evaluation documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Security System Upgrade at Monroe Substation

Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property at BPA's Monroe Substation near the City of Monroe in Snohomish County, Washington (T28N R7E SEC22). The area around the substation may be characterized as sparse residential, light industrial, agricultural, BPA-owned open spaces and woodland. Ground cover within the project site consists primarily of regularly mowed grass species, a small number of ornamental shrubs, and graveled ground surfaces in the substation yard. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Wetland Inventory, there are no wetlands in the project area, nor are there hydric soils present.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: BPA initiated Section 106 consultation on March 18, 2026, with the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, the Tulalip Tribes, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). BPA determined that the proposed activities would not result in any historic properties affected. On March 19, 2026, the Snoqualmie Tribe reviewed the project and had no comments. On April 13, 2026, the SHPO concurred with BPA's delineation of the Area of Potential Effects (AP`E) and assigned [2026-03-01808] to the consultation. On April 17, 2026 the 30-day response period expired. No other comments were received.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Ground-disturbing activities would include a mixture of digging up and replacing the fencing footers, trenching within the substation yard, and trenching to install grounding structures for the parking lot fence. In addition, use of vehicles and heavy equipment may result in minor soil compaction. About 200 square feet of soils outside the current substation fence would be permanently graveled and made part of the substation yard. Project activities are not expected to impact site geology.

Notes: During construction, all appropriate Best Management Practices would be used to implement site-specific erosion and sediment control.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species, or plant species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) occurring at the project site. All project actions, including the substation expansion area, would be in areas maintained for little or no vegetation.

4. **Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of special-status wildlife species or suitable habitat present in the project area. Minor and temporary disturbance of common wildlife species could occur from elevated noise during construction. Because the work would be occurring in proximity to a fenced and currently operating substation yard, any wildlife present are likely used to human presence and noise.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project area has no nearby waterbodies, is not in a floodplain, and would not affect fish species.

6. **Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project area is not within a wetland.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project activities are unlikely to reach depths where groundwater or aquifers could be affected.

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The project would not result in changes to land use or specially-designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The new security fence would be slightly taller and more opaque than the existing fence, and the cameras and security poles would be new additions. Overall, project actions would result in a minor alteration to visual quality and would remain visually consistent with the overall characteristics of the current site.

10. **Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in emissions in the local area from vehicle and equipment use. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. **Noise**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected for this area as a result of this project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. No impact to human health and safety is expected as a result of project activities.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation: N/A.

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A.

Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation: N/A.

Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation: N/A.

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project site is on BPA fee-owned land and would not require any additional landowner notifications, involvement, or coordination.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

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